

sector employees to be able to access the retirement plans when they're part-time.

SPEAKER WITHEM: (Gavel.) Senator Wesely, excuse me. We can't hear anything up here, if you...body would please be somewhat at order, we would appreciate it.

SENATOR WESELY: There's some sort of mediation divorce settlement being worked out over here and I think we're going to have to see how that works out. Let me, I did pass out for you a two-page chart that was prepared for me by the Research Office that deals with salary and benefits available to selected public officials, and I just thought it would be kind of curious to look at our salaries and our benefits versus the state officers and there you've got the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Auditor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, and Treasurer. And I thought it might be interesting to look at what Congress gets paid in terms of salary and perks and I think if you have a chance to look at this, you will feel...if you haven't felt badly about our compensation in the past, it will probably make you feel quite ill. Obviously, compared to the Congress where they're making \$133,000 a year, all the way up to \$171,000 a year, plus all the incredible retirement and insurance and expense accounts that they get, and here we are at our lowly 12,000 a year, without insurance, without retirement, with some expenses, but really not covering totally what the expenses are, you can see that we're low on the totem pole in comparison. So I think, I hope the public will react favorably. One of the things that always...back to Senator Schellpeper's point about the term limits and people being concerned, but I always argued that I think a lot of people didn't want high salaries for legislators because they didn't want them to look at it as a job for life and staying there and having this big compensation. Well, now we've got term limits and, with term limits, I think you want to attract the very best people and you want to compensate them as well as you can to get the very best people. They're only going to be here a short period of time and I think.. and I think the argument about having good benefits and salaries for state legislators has gone aside. I think that's one change in our favor for suggesting that we increase the...not the compensation but at least some of the access to benefits as a state legislator. You're not going to be here forever anymore. That change is clearly there and so I think that is one change that works in our favor in making the argument that we ought to reconsider where we're at in terms of